

BRIEFLY

TFFR News Briefs for Employers from the ND Retirement and Investment Office
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Electronic Reporting via Internet

Are you sick of sending your monthly teacher retirement information on diskette? Tired of hearing TFFR staff voices over the phone saying, "We have received your monthly diskette, but the diskette is blank. Please send us a backup diskette." If so, we have the solution for you! REPORTING MONTHLY TFFR INFORMATION VIA INTERNET.

As you know, TFFR has been working with the Department of Public Instruction (DPI) on giving electronic employers an opportunity to report their monthly information over the internet. Because of the hard work of DPI Information Services and TFFR Information Services, it gives me great pleasure to report, **"We are ready!"**

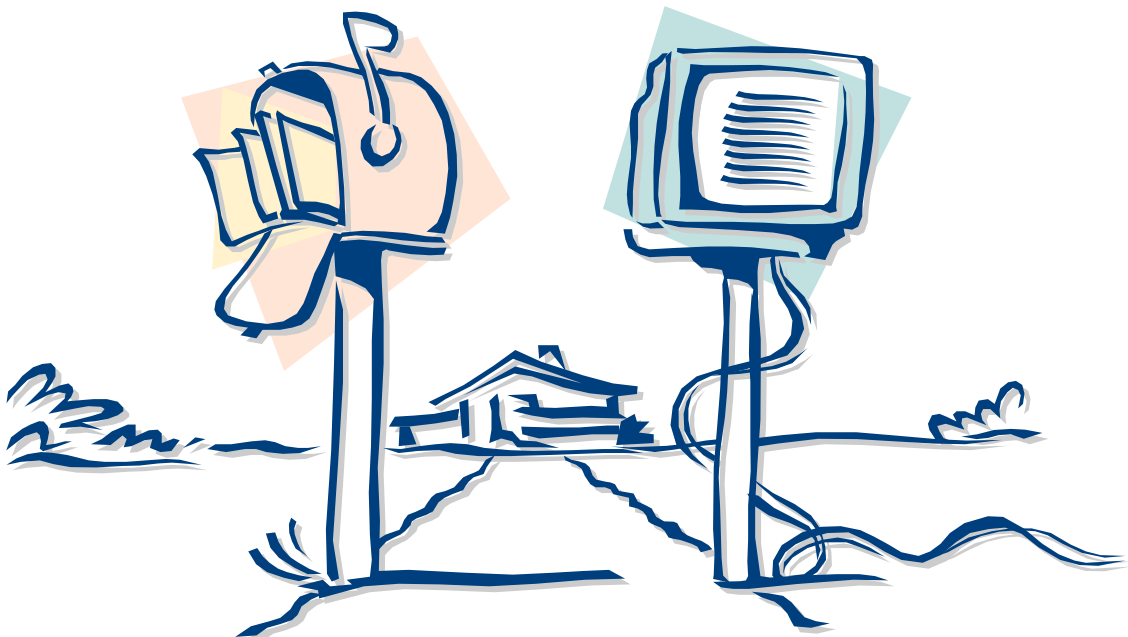
Undoubtedly you have questions concerning reporting through the internet. Hopefully, we can answer a couple right off the bat.

1) How secure is this method?

The DPI Online Reporting System page will be used to transfer TFFR information and is a secure site. When you view the site, you will see a padlock icon in your browser's status bar (usually at the bottom right corner). The file transfer from the district to the web site uses the Secure Sockets Layer (SSL) protocol with 128-bit encryption. This is the highest level currently available.

2) How will I know if the information has been received by TFFR?

TFFR is working on an automated email reply indicating that we have received your file.



3) Who is responsible for the accuracy of the TFFR information being submitted over the internet?

In all reporting formats (paper or electronic), the employer/school district is responsible for ensuring the information is true and correct, and that only authorized representatives submit such information to TFFR.

4) What will TFFR require to start reporting through the internet?

To guarantee no disruptions of monthly reporting, TFFR will require a three-month testing period. During the testing period, in addition to sending the information via the internet, the school district must also continue sending a diskette, the paper print-out, and their check. Once a district reports three continuous error-free months, TFFR



will notify the district, in writing, that they have successfully completed the testing period and that they can discontinue sending duplicate reports on diskette.

TFFR currently has three test districts who have reported through the internet for the last year. These districts are willing to answer any questions you may have on reporting through the Internet. In addition to TFFR staff, please feel free to contact Jennifer Braaten of Finley-Sharon (524-2420), or Susan Fisher of Mandan (663-9531).

Interested?

If your district is interested in reporting over the internet, please complete and return the bottom portion of this page. TFFR will notify you when you can start reporting through the internet. At that time we will send you more detailed instructions.

Complete and return to TFFR:

☐ Our school district is interested in electronic reporting over the Internet. Please send me more information.

☐ We are not interested in electronic reporting via the Internet at this time.

EMPLOYER NAME: _____

EMPLOYER NUMBER: _____

BUSINESS MANAGER: _____

QUESTIONS OR CONCERNS: _____

Retirement Program Options for Reservists

Questions are beginning to arise from Employers and Members regarding how TFFR benefits should be handled in the event a reservist is called to active duty.

If a TFFR member is called to active duty, a Member Action form (SFN 50981) must be completed indicating the date the member leaves active employment and begins a military leave of absence. Upon the member's return to work, complete and submit another Member Action form with a copy of the member's military discharge paper (DD214) to document active duty.

The Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act (USERRA) affects TFFR members who have their North Dakota teaching career interrupted by military duty. USERRA qualified service will be recognized for vesting and Rule of 85 eligibility. However, a member's benefit will not be calculated using the military service time

unless the military credit is purchased. If eligible, the cost to purchase military service credit and lost retirement salary is in **Table 1**.

It is important for members to examine the cost and benefit of purchasing any lost credit as soon as possible after their return. The cost to purchase will increase if paid after the USERRA window, which is three times the amount of military service (five year maximum).

Example: Member serves 13 months and upon returning to TFFR employment has 39 months (3 x 13 months of service) to complete the military credit purchase at the USERRA cost. The cost to purchase after this window will include interest at 6 percent.

If you or your employees have any questions regarding military service and TFFR, please contact Shelly or Denise at the administrative office.

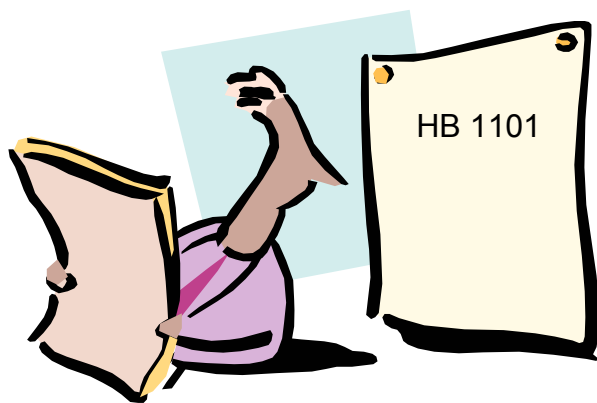
Table 1	
Model 1	Member pays employee contribution (7.75% of lost salary) Employer pays 0
Model 2 All	Member pays 0 Employer pays employee contribution (7.75% of lost salary)
Model 2 Partial & Model 3	Member and employer each pay their part of the employee contribution (total 7.75% of lost salary)



Retirement Eligibility Profiles

TFFR can provide school districts with a Retirement Eligibility Profile report. This report gives the district a twenty year projection regarding TFFR member retirement eligibility (Rule of 85 or age 65). In the past, TFFR was only able to give the school district the number of employees eligible to retire each year. With the passing of House Bill 1101, TFFR can provide the names of the individuals, upon request.

If you would like a Retirement Eligibility Profile report for your district, please contact our office.



Disability Benefits

TFFR provides disability retirement benefits should a member become disabled and unable to perform his or her normal job duties.

Disability benefits are available if the member has one or more years of North Dakota service credit. The disability must be "total" and result in the member's inability to perform the duties of a teacher for 12 months or more. Application for disability benefits must be filed within 36 months from the last day of TFFR covered employment.

Members may not realize that they are eligible for benefits or that an application deadline exists. Please contact Shelly Schumacher, Retirement Program Supervisor, if you know of anyone who may qualify for disability benefits and may not have notified our office.

Reminders



- New business manager workshop November 1, 2001. Please contact your regional director for information.
- Please use the new Return to Work Forms dated 6-2001. Throw the old forms away.
- Don't forget to fill out a new Member Action Form for all new teachers and for teachers who are returning to your district after a year or more lapse in employment.